

**Report of the twenty-seventh session of the**

**COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES**

**Rome, 5–9 March 2007**



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## PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

This is the final version of the report as approved by the twenty-seventh session of the Committee on Fisheries held in Rome from 5 to 9 March 2007.

FAO.

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### ABSTRACT

The twenty-seventh session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) was held in Rome, Italy, from 5 to 9 March 2007. The Committee reviewed the issues of an international character and the programme of work of FAO/CI in fisheries and aquaculture. In addition to the further work to facilitate and ensure the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and its International Plans of Action (IPOAs) (on capacity; illegal, unreported and unregulated [IUU] fishing; sharks; and seabirds), COFI welcomed the pending submission of a general multi-year programme of work on genetic resource management in fisheries and aquaculture. The Committee expressed concern about the level of fishing capacity which was higher than prior to the 2004 tsunami in some of the areas affected by the disaster and recognized that it called for (with FAO assistance as required) the design and implementation of sustainable and effective fisheries management arrangements that included a gradually phasing out fishing overcapacity, monitoring, access and livelihood considerations. COFI also referred to the issue of safety-at-sea in relation to the use of sub-standard vessels. The Committee recognized the importance of traceability for fish trade and welcomed the Memorandum of Understanding between FAO and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The Committee reaffirmed its trust in FAO to play a coordinating role in advancing the global aquaculture agenda and highlighted the importance of addressing socio-economic impacts of aquaculture and other issues, such as improving planning and policy development at national and regional levels. The Committee agreed to give greater attention to small-scale fisheries and welcomed the convening of a broad-based international conference focusing specifically on small-scale fisheries. The Committee encouraged Members to join or cooperate with the voluntary International Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) Network and to develop a new legally binding instrument based on the Model Scheme on Port State Measures to Combat IUU Fishing and the IPO-IUU. The Committee identified several areas for further work on issues related to the ecosystem approach to fisheries. The Committee found the level of the budget assigned to the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department unsatisfactory and not commensurate with the importance of its work and the expectations of the international community, and made a strong request that the relevant FAO Governing Bodies allocate more resources to the Department.

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9 March 2007

Sir,

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the report of the Twenty-seventh Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI), which was held in Rome from 5 to 9 March 2007.

Accept, Sir, the assurance of my highest consideration.

A. Hettiarachchi  
Chairperson  
Committee on Fisheries

Mr Mohammed Saeid Noori-Naeini  
Independent Chairperson  
Council of FAO

This One



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## MATTERS REQUIRING THE ATTENTION OF THE COUNCIL

### FOR DECISION/INFORMATION

#### The Committee:

#### **Progress in the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, related International Plans of Action and Strategy**

- i. **Agreed** that while there had been progress in implementation of the Code, there was more that needed to be done by Members individually and collectively (para. 13).
- ii. **Agreed** that, depending on cost and related considerations, best practice technical guidelines to support the elaboration of **National Plans of Action (NPOAs)** for seabirds would be developed through continuing joint work between FAO and relevant bodies and organizations or an expert consultation (para. 14).
- iii. **Concurred** that efforts towards implementing the **International Plan of Action (IPOA)-Sharks** were improving but that further intensive work was required (para. 15).
- iv. **Reaffirmed** linkages between overcapacity, allocations, overfishing and IUU fishing, **agreed** that States should match their **fishing capacity** to sustainable harvesting levels and **agreed** upon the need to ensure that the urgent actions required in the **IPOA-Capacity** were undertaken expeditiously and that its implementation was facilitated without delay (para. 16).
- v. **Agreed** that the incidence and extent of illegal, **unreported and unregulated (IUU)** fishing remained a grave threat to sustainability and that it should be addressed comprehensively (para. 17).
- vi. **Urged** FAO to continue its proactive engagement with World Trade Organization (WTO) to allow for a better understanding of the **fisheries subsidy issues** and their potential impact on resource sustainability and **encouraged** FAO to continue its studies on the impact of **subsidies** on fishing capacity, IUU fishing, fisheries management and sustainable development in a manner that complemented, but should not duplicate, WTO's work (para. 18).
- vii. **Welcomed** the Secretariat's advice that it would submit to the Eleventh Session of the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in June 2007 a general multi-year programme of work and a request for external funding for **genetic resource management** in fisheries and aquaculture (para. 19).
- viii. **Agreed** that the **Sub-Committees on Aquaculture and on Fish Trade**, respectively, should take responsibility for monitoring the implementation of Articles 9 and 11 of the Code with the format and frequency of more detailed monitoring to be determined by the Sub-Committees at their 2008 Sessions; and that future Sub-Committee reports presented to COFI would contain information on progress with the implementation of these Articles (para. 21).
- ix. **Urged** FAO to ensure that it continued to assert its international leadership as the only global fisheries body and **agreed** that FAO must maintain its high profile in global fisheries affairs in order to integrate debate from across the various fora dealing with fisheries and aquaculture issues (para. 23).

#### **Rehabilitation and reconstruction of livelihoods in the fisheries and aquaculture sector in countries affected by the tsunami in 2004**

- i. **Agreed** that **significant progress** had been made in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the fisheries and aquaculture sector, as reported by affected Members, although complementary reconstruction effort was still needed in many areas (para. 25).

- ii. **Acknowledged** the need for the issue of an higher level of **fishing capacity** than prior to the tsunami in some of the areas affected by the disaster to be addressed, with FAO assistance as required, through the design and implementation of sustainable and effective fisheries management arrangements that included a gradually phasing out fishing overcapacity, monitoring, access and livelihood considerations (para. 26).
- iii. **Expressed** its concern for **safety-at-sea** issues in relation to the use of sub-standard vessels and **recommended** strongly that FAO, in consultation with other relevant UN agencies, continue to monitor and address the problem in close collaboration with affected countries (para. 27).
- iv. **Welcomed** the emphasis given in the programmes for **further long-term support** for reconstruction and sustainable development to areas such as fisheries monitoring and assessment, fisheries planning and institution building for sustainable development and fisheries management, habitat restoration, safety-at-sea, infrastructure rehabilitation, post-harvest activities and aquaculture development (para. 28).
- v. **Recommended** that FAO report more extensively on **lessons learned** from the post-tsunami rehabilitation and reconstruction work and widely disseminate results so as to enhance preparedness (para. 29).

#### **Decisions and recommendations of the tenth session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade**

- i. **Endorsed** the report of the tenth session of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade (para. 32).
- ii. **Recognized** the importance of **traceability** for fish trade and **expressed** the view that **traceability schemes for small-scale fisheries** should be compatible with WTO rules (para. 34).
- iii. **Welcomed** the Memorandum of Understanding between FAO and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and **recognized** the value of the **FAO ad hoc Expert Advisory Panel's** work in reviewing and providing recommendations regarding any relevant proposals to amend the CITES Appendices; and noted that after each CITES Conference of the Parties, FAO should undertake an evaluation of whether the recommendations of the ad hoc Expert Advisory Panel had been taken into account and, if not, why they had not been (para. 35).
- iv. **Recommended** that FAO undertake further work in relation to the minimum substantive requirements and criteria for **inland capture fisheries ecolabels**, in the draft International Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Inland Capture Fisheries, in combination with similar outstanding work relating to the minimum substantive criteria laid down in the guidelines for **marine capture fisheries ecolabels** (para. 36).
- v. **Agreed** that FAO should convene a technical consultation to consider the **Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fish Trade** drafted by the Expert Consultation on Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fish Trade, which was convened in Washington DC, United States of America, from 22 to 26 January 2007 (para. 37).
- vi. **Endorsed** the findings of an FAO report examining the relationship between **fish trade and food security** and **recommended** that FAO continue work in this area (para. 38).
- vii. **Recommended** that FAO provide technical expertise and cooperation to the ongoing WTO negotiations on **fisheries subsidies** and be prepared, as necessary, to assist in the implementation of future fisheries subsidies disciplines (para. 40).
- viii. **Agreed** that future agendas for the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade meetings should be forward looking and attempt to identify emerging trade issues (para. 41).

**Decisions and recommendations of the  
third session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture**

- i. **Endorsed** the report of the third session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture (para. 43).
- ii. **Recognized** the ever increasing importance of the **aquaculture sector** and the need for its sustainable growth in a responsible manner and **reaffirmed** its trust in FAO to play a **coordinating role** in advancing the global aquaculture agenda (para. 44).
- iii. **Welcomed** the recent change in the **name** of the FAO Fisheries Department to the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department and **stressed** the importance of an adequate Departmental **budget** so that more resources could be allocated for aquaculture-related activities (para. 45).
- iv. **Highlighted** the importance of addressing **socio-economic impacts of aquaculture**, improving **planning and policy development** at national and regional levels, ensuring **food safety and human health**, and developing **best management practices, risk assessment methodologies and guidelines for the better management of aquaculture** and requested FAO to take appropriate action to prioritize and implement the **recommendations** made by the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture during its Third Session, recalling in particular the need for **technical assistance** to Members (para. 46).
- v. **Underscored** the need for better **information and data** on aquaculture in support of the sustainable development of the sector and **endorsed** the **draft Strategy and Outline Plan for Improving Information on Status and Trends of Aquaculture**, as well as the concept of establishing a **Coordinating Working Party on Aquaculture Statistics** and called for speedy implementation of the Strategy (para. 47).
- vi. **Agreed** that high priority should be given to **aquaculture development in Africa** and a special programme with regular and extra-budgetary funding support should be established with the aim of providing special assistance to African countries to access financial services and markets, to boost investment in aquaculture as well as exchange knowledge and experience, particularly through South-South Cooperation (Para. 48).
- vii. **Requested** FAO to take appropriate action through conducting expert workshops and meetings to develop **guidelines on aquaculture certification** (para. 49).
- viii. **Supported** strongly the continuing work towards the development of **regional aquaculture networks in Africa and the Americas** similar to the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific (NACA) (para. 50).
- ix. **Welcomed** the proposed work on **genetic resources management in fisheries and aquaculture** (para. 51).

**Social issues in small-scale fisheries**

- i. **Stressed** that policies and development programmes needed to be tailored to the specific needs in particular locations, countries and regions and types of small-scale fisheries that could range from occasional subsistence activities to year-round commercial operations targeting fish for export markets (para. 55).
- ii. **Recognized** that progress in the implementation of **International human rights instruments** including the conventions on the rights of seafarers and working conditions in fisheries were critical to both small-scale and large-scale fisheries and **stressed** that the recognition and adoption of **human rights principles** can help achieve poverty eradication and facilitate the adoption of responsible fisheries practices (para. 58).

- iii. **Expressed** its support for the **strategy of action** as noted in paragraph 23 of COFI/2007/6 that brought together responsible fisheries and social development and **stressed** the need to adopt a **rights-based approach** to managing small-scale fisheries that respects the interests of present and future generations and ensures resource sustainability, reduces vulnerability and optimizes the flow of benefits to fishing communities and the wider economy (para. 59).
- iv. **Highlighted** the importance of **disaster prevention and mitigation measures and safety-at-sea** for reducing vulnerability of fishers and coastal communities (para. 60)
- v. **Took note** of the strong support by many members to establish a dedicated COFI Sub-Committee and/or a specific programme of work on small-scale fisheries supported by dedicated extra-budgetary funding and **agreed** that the issue of small-scale fisheries was important and FAO should continue to work on this issue (para. 61).
- vi. **Welcomed** the proposal by Norway that FAO examine the convening of a broad-based international conference focussing specifically on small-scale fisheries of a format similar to the 1999 FishRights and 2006 Sharing the Fish Conferences (para. 62).

**Combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing through monitoring, control and surveillance, port States measures and other means**

- i. **Recognized** that all those involved in IUU fishing such as beneficial owners of fishing vessels, as well as of transshipment and support vessels, should be included in the scope of measures to fight against IUU fishing (para. 67).
- ii. **Acknowledged** the urgent need for a comprehensive suite of **port State measures** and **took note** of the strong support for the Norwegian proposal to develop a new legally binding instrument based on the Model Scheme on Port State Measures to Combat IUU Fishing and the IPOA-IUU and **endorsed** the following timetable:
  - an **Expert Consultation** to be convened during the latter half of 2007 to prepare a draft agreement; and
  - a **Technical Consultation** to finalize the instrument's text during the first half of 2008 and present it to the Twenty-eighth COFI Session in 2009 (para. 68).
- iii. **Supported** the convening of an **Expert Consultation** to further develop the concept of a comprehensive **global record of fishing vessels** as described in FAO's feasibility study (para. 70).
- iv. **Requested** FAO consider the possibility, subject to the availability of funds, of an **expert consultation** to develop criteria for assessing the performance of **flag States** as well as to examine possible actions against vessels flying the flags of States not meeting such criteria (para. 71).
- v. **Encouraged** Members to join or cooperate with the voluntary **International MCS Network**, make use of its work and support its enhancement, as a tool to improve enforcement globally (para. 72).

**Implementing the ecosystem approach to fisheries, including deep-sea fisheries, marine debris and lost and abandoned gear**

- i. **Urged** FAO to complete and distribute the **technical guidelines on social, institutional and economic considerations in EAF** as quickly as possible (para. 73).
- ii. **Supported** a proposal that FAO should undertake a scoping study to identify the key issues on **climate change and fisheries**, initiate a discussion on how the fishing industry can adapt to climate change, and for FAO to take a lead in informing fishers and policy makers about the likely consequences of climate change for fisheries (para. 76).

- iii. **Agreed** that **FAO** should convene an **expert consultation**, no later than August 2007, to prepare **draft technical guidelines including standards for the management of deep-sea fisheries in the high seas**, to be finalized at a **technical consultation** in January or February 2008; **agreed** that the technical guidelines should include standards and criteria for identifying vulnerable marine ecosystems beyond areas under national jurisdiction and the impacts of fishing activities on such ecosystems, in order to facilitate the adoption and the implementation of conservation and management measures by RFMO/As and flag States (pursuant to paragraphs 83 and 86 of the UNGA Resolution A/RES/61/105) and **noted** that a meeting of States engaged in high sea deep-seas fisheries was referred to in paragraph 89 of the UNGA Resolution (para. 77).
- iv. **Agreed** that the issue of **derelict fishing gear** is particularly relevant to **FAO** and **requested** **FAO** to consult with **IMO** in its efforts to assess current international instruments or measures related to **marine debris** (para. 78).
- v. **Encouraged** **FAO** to complete its **technical guidelines on the design, implementation and testing of MPAs** in relation to fishing at the earliest opportunity (para. 79).
- vi. **Agreed** that **FAO** should, in cooperation with relevant bodies, develop **best practice guidelines** to assist countries and RFMOs in implementation of the **IPOA-Seabirds** and that the best practice guidelines should be extended to other relevant fishing gears (para. 80).
- vii. **Agreed** that **FAO** should continue its work on **biodiversity mapping** as an important contribution to implementation of EAF in collaboration with **CBD** and **agreed** that **FAO** should follow the request in: (i) paragraph 90 of the UNGA Resolution to create a **global database on vulnerable marine ecosystems in areas beyond national jurisdiction**, in cooperation with other relevant organizations such as **IUCN**, and (ii) paragraph 87 of the Resolution to create a list of **authorized vessels engaged in high seas deep-sea fisheries** (para. 81).

**Strengthening regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) and their performances including the outcome of the 2007 tuna RFMOs meeting**

- i. **Was informed** by Japan about the joint meeting of five RFMOs with a mandate for the management of tuna stocks that was held in Kobe, Japan, in January 2007 (para. 84).
- ii. **Noted** that performance review processes of RFMOs and RFBs should be transparent (para. 86).

**FAO's Programme of Work in fisheries and aquaculture**

- i. **Expressed** dissatisfaction with the level of the **budget** assigned to the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, which is not commensurate with the importance of its work and the expectations of the international community and **requested** strongly that the relevant **FAO Governing Bodies** allocate more resources to the Department (para. 91).
- ii. **Indicated** that it would like to receive, as a matter of course, ex-post and any other analysis of how the total fisheries budget had been spent in the preceeding biennium, including both field work and policy work (para.92).
- iii. **Reiterated** that all activities of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department were important and **emphasized** that the work programme of the Department should take due consideration of the **priorities** highlighted by **COFI** in its report (para. 94).

## INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee on Fisheries (COFI) held its twenty-seventh session in Rome from 5 to 9 March 2007.
2. The Session was attended by 119 Members of the Committee, by observers from four other FAO Member Nations, the Holy See, by representatives from five specialized agencies of the United Nations and by observers from 61 intergovernmental and international non-governmental organizations.
3. A list of delegates and observers is attached as Appendix B.
4. The Session was called to order by the outgoing Chairperson Mr Glenn Hurry (Australia). He stressed that international cooperation was essential to achieve sustainable fisheries and underscored the need for FAO to play a key role in cooperation with regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs).

## ELECTION OF THE CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSONS AND DESIGNATION OF THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE

5. Mr A. Hettiarachchi, (Sri Lanka) was unanimously elected Chairperson of the Committee and Mr Z.S. Karnicki (Poland) was elected First Vice-Chairperson.
6. El Salvador, Iceland, Iran (Islamic Republic of), New Zealand and United Republic of Tanzania were elected as other Vice-Chairpersons.
7. The Committee elected Mr Julien Turenne (France) as Chairperson of the Drafting Committee with the following membership: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Japan, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Thailand, United Kingdom and United States of America.

## OPENING OF THE SESSION

8. The Session was addressed by Mr David A. Harcharik, FAO Deputy Director-General, who recalled the new name of the Fisheries Department (Fisheries and Aquaculture Department), stressing the fact that this better reflected new challenges and the broader framework of the FAO reform, especially the growing importance of aquaculture. He also highlighted the importance of the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the identification of mechanisms and strategies that would facilitate and enhance its implementation as a comprehensive instrument directed to all those involved in fisheries and aquaculture. The full text of his statement is attached as Appendix D.
9. Mr Efthimios Mitropoulos, Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) addressed the Session. He acknowledged the good relationships and collaboration between FAO and IMO, as two of the major United Nations organizations concerned with marine affairs. He stressed the importance of two IMO instruments (the Torremolinos International Convention for the Safety of Fishing Vessels, 1977 and the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch Keeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel, 1995) and invited States present at the meeting to take action to

ensure a prompt entry into force of these Conventions. The full text of his statement is attached as Appendix E.

## **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SESSION**

10. The Committee noted the Declaration of Competence and Voting Rights presented by the European Community.

11. The Committee adopted the Agenda and Timetable for the Session shown in Appendix A to this Report. The list of documents placed before the Committee is shown in Appendix C.

## **PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES, RELATED INTERNATIONAL PLANS OF ACTION AND STRATEGY**

12. The Secretariat introduced document COFI/2007/2. It also referred to a “made available” paper that provided a statistical analysis of responses by FAO Members to the 2006 questionnaire. The Committee observed, with satisfaction, that the response rate for this report (37 percent) had improved over the response rate for the last report (27 percent). Members were encouraged to improve their rates of reporting.

13. Many Members provided information concerning the measures they had adopted to implement the Code, noting in many cases that it now formed the basis for national fisheries policy and legislation. The Committee was advised that Members were making efforts to disseminate information about the Code, especially in small-scale fishing communities, as a means of deepening its implementation, enhancing livelihoods and improving food security. Regional groups were also seeking to harmonize policies and actions to strengthen the Code’s implementation. Some Members pointed out that these activities also extended to the international plans of action (IPOAs) and the strategy for improving information on status and trends in capture fisheries (Strategy). The Committee acknowledged the utility and importance of regional cooperation in facilitating the implementation of the Code and its related instruments. In general, the Committee agreed that while there had been progress in implementation of the Code, there was more that needed to be done by Members individually and collectively.

14. In relation to the implementation of the ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) and on the matter of bycatch, the Committee focussed considerable attention on the IPOAs for seabirds and sharks and the sea turtle guidelines. Several Members advised the Committee on their progress to develop or implement their national plans of action (NPOAs) for seabirds. Many Members were of the view that FAO, in collaboration with BirdLife International, should seek to strengthen the implementation of the IPOA-Seabirds by developing best practice technical guidelines to support the elaboration of NPOAs. The Committee agreed that depending on cost and related considerations the guidelines would be developed through continuing joint work between FAO and relevant bodies and organizations or an expert consultation.

15. Similarly, many Members referred to their efforts to develop NPOAs to implement the IPOA-Sharks. Some of them outlined policies and practices in place to ban the catching of some shark species and other measures prohibiting finning and carcase dumping as a means of promoting sustainability. The Committee concurred that efforts towards implementing the IPOA-Sharks were improving but that further intensive work was required. Some Members also explained measures they had adopted to implement the sea turtle guidelines, pointing out that the use of bycatch excluder devices (BEDs) were already mandatory in most trawl fisheries.

16. The issue of capacity was addressed, with a number of Members stating that overcapacity was as important an issue as illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. The Committee reaffirmed linkages between overcapacity, allocations, overfishing and IUU fishing. The need for both national and regional action was highlighted. The Committee agreed that States should match their fishing capacity to sustainable harvesting levels. The Committee agreed upon the need to ensure that the urgent actions required in the IPOA-Capacity were undertaken expeditiously and that its implementation was facilitated without delay. Some Members recalled that in addressing the problem of overcapacity, the right of developing States to develop their own fisheries, as well as to participate in high seas fisheries, should be taken into account.

17. The Committee agreed that the incidence and extent of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing remained a grave threat to sustainability and that it should be addressed comprehensively. Many Members described national initiatives and measures to combat IUU fishing, including the development and implementation of NPOAs-IUU. Some Members also referred to their monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) programmes and the adoption of mandatory vessel monitoring systems (VMS) that were considered basic tools in curbing IUU fishing. The importance of product traceability was highlighted by some Members in some cases as a means of blocking IUU-caught fish from entering national and international markets.

18. Many Members referred to FAO's technical work on subsidies. Recognizing the central role of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Committee urged FAO to continue its proactive engagement with WTO to allow for a better understanding of the fisheries subsidy issues and their potential impact on resource sustainability. Furthermore, the Committee encouraged FAO to continue its studies on the impact of subsidies on fishing capacity, IUU fishing, fisheries management and sustainable development in a manner that complemented, but should not duplicate, WTO's work.

19. The Committee welcomed the Secretariat's advice that it would submit to the Eleventh Session of the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in June 2007 a general multi-year programme of work and a request for external funding for genetic resource management in fisheries and aquaculture. The Committee expressed its pleasure that the Code would serve as a guide for this work. The Committee will be kept informed of progress of this work.

20. The 2006 Review Conference of the 1995 United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement and recent UNGA fishery resolution recommended that FAO enhance its role with respect to the establishment of a global capture fishery statistics database to provide information on relevant stocks, based on where the catch was taken. Recognizing the primary role of regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) and regional fishery bodies (RFBs) in detailed



data collection for management and the coordination role of the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP), the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department referred the matter to the Twenty-second Session of CWP (Rome, Italy, 26 February–2 March 2007) for consideration. Its Chairperson advised the Committee that CWP recommended that FAO should consolidate the catch data of RFBs into a single database under the general guidance of CWP. The CWP further recommended to explore the utilization of VMS data, in addition to their MCS uses, for scientific and statistical purposes. Several Members expressed the view that catch data should be collected in a manner that allows to distinguish between catches taken within or beyond areas under national jurisdiction and recalled the relevant sections of the report adopted by the 2006 Review Conference of the 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement. The Committee took note that the implementation of the above described changes could constitute an additional collection and reporting burden for Members and would have financial implications for FAO.

21. The Committee agreed that the Sub-Committees on Aquaculture and on Fish Trade, respectively, should take responsibility for monitoring the implementation of Articles 9 and 11 of the Code with the format and frequency of more detailed monitoring to be determined by the Sub-Committees at their 2008 Sessions. It was further agreed that future Sub-Committee reports presented to COFI would contain information on progress with the implementation of these Articles. To ensure that there was continuity in reporting and to enable the Sub-Committees to take responsibility for more detailed monitoring and reporting, the 2008 questionnaire on the Code will not change. The Committee noted that there would be no change to current arrangements for the monitoring and reporting for the Code and that biennial reporting will continue.

22. Many Members thanked FAO for the technical assistance provided to support the implementation of the Code and its related instruments, especially with respect to the management of inland and marine capture fisheries and the development of sustainable aquaculture. They underscored the importance of Article 5 of the Code and called for a greater share of FAO's budget to be allocated to fisheries and aquaculture so that capacity building and institutional strengthening in developing countries could be enhanced.

23. Acknowledging the rising number of organizations engaged in international fisheries matters, the Committee urged FAO to ensure that it continued to assert its international leadership as the only global fisheries body. The Committee agreed that FAO must maintain its high profile in global fisheries affairs in order to integrate debate from across the various fora dealing with fisheries and aquaculture issues.

#### **REHABILITATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF LIVELIHOODS IN THE FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE SECTOR IN COUNTRIES AFFECTED BY THE TSUNAMI IN 2004**

24. The Secretariat introduced document COFI/2007/3 and related documents Inf. 4 and 7, providing information on the rehabilitation and reconstruction of livelihoods in the fisheries and aquaculture sector in countries affected by the 2004 tsunami as well as on FAO's response to this major natural disaster.

25. Members affected directly by the tsunami expressed their gratitude to the international donor community for the assistance received following this tragic event and commended FAO for its prompt and sustained support in areas such as damage and needs assessment,

planning for sustainable rehabilitation and reconstruction, donor coordination and the provision of essential inputs. The Committee agreed that significant progress had been made in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the fisheries and aquaculture sector, as reported by affected Members, although complementary reconstruction effort was still needed in many areas.

26. Many Members expressed concern about the level of fishing capacity. It is now higher than prior to the tsunami in some of the areas affected by the disaster. This occurred quite inadvertently due to the massive and uncoordinated assistance received for input replacement and as a result of the higher input efficiency of new vessels. Consequently, there was now concern about resource sustainability and the maintenance of livelihoods because the pre-tsunami levels of fishing capacity were already high and in some cases excessive. The Committee acknowledged the need for this issue to be addressed, with FAO assistance as required, through the design and implementation of sustainable and effective fisheries management arrangements that included a gradually phasing out fishing overcapacity, monitoring, access and livelihood considerations.

27. Members were informed that a significant percentage of the boats that were provided through the many organizations involved in emergency assistance and rehabilitation may be considered below minimum safety standards. The Committee expressed its concern for safety-at-sea issues in relation to the use of these sub-standard vessels and recommended strongly that FAO, in consultation with other relevant UN agencies, continue to monitor and address the problem in close collaboration with affected countries.

28. The Committee was advised of priorities and programmes being established by some Members for further long-term support for reconstruction and sustainable development. They expressed their appreciation for the role played by FAO's Coordination and Technical Support Unit (CSTU), especially with regard to needs assessment and strategic planning. The Committee welcomed the emphasis given in these programmes to areas such as fisheries monitoring and assessment, fisheries planning and institution building for sustainable development and fisheries management, habitat restoration, safety-at-sea, infrastructure rehabilitation, post-harvest activities and aquaculture development. Several Members informed the Committee about the support they were providing to affected countries and the possibilities of further collaboration with these countries and with FAO.

29. The Committee recommended that FAO report more extensively on lessons learned from the post-tsunami rehabilitation and reconstruction work and widely disseminate results so as to enhance preparedness. Some Members stressed the need for better donor coordination, inclusion of local expertise and a greater emphasis on technical assistance when faced with severe natural disasters while other Members emphasized that long-term considerations should guide short-term responses early in the rehabilitation and reconstruction process. Mention was also made by some Members of the need for FAO procedures to be adjusted when emergency responses were required to allow for increased flexibility and more rapid response.

30. Many Members referred to the importance of, and need for, further work on early-warning systems for fishing communities and they requested FAO in cooperation with relevant agencies to assist by providing guidance on coastal warning systems. It was also suggested that Members consider developing proper disaster management frameworks and supporting legislation.

## **DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TENTH SESSION OF THE COFI SUB-COMMITTEE ON FISH TRADE**

31. The item was introduced by the Chairperson of the tenth session of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade and the Secretariat and discussed on the basis of documents COFI/2007/4, Inf. 4, 7 and 8.

32. The Committee, noting that the Sub-Committee was the foremost forum to discuss international fish trade issues, endorsed the report of the Tenth Session of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade and expressed its appreciation for its work. The Committee thanked Spain for hosting and supporting the Session.

33. The Committee noted the importance of international trade in fish and fish products for developing countries. Many Members stressed the need for FAO to provide technical advice and assistance to improve market access for small-scale fisheries from developing countries. Many Members noted their concerns about the increasing complexity of safety and quality requirements for fish and fish products and the burden it imposed on developing countries to comply with these requirements.

34. The Committee recognized the importance of traceability for fish trade. Many Members also noted the need to develop simple and practical traceability schemes for small-scale fisheries. The Committee expressed the view that such schemes should be compatible with WTO rules. Some Members proposed that a technical consultation on traceability be convened.

35. The Committee welcomed the Memorandum of Understanding between FAO and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The Committee recognized the value of the FAO ad hoc Expert Advisory Panel's work in reviewing and providing recommendations regarding any relevant proposals to amend the CITES Appendices. The Committee noted that after each CITES Conference of the Parties, FAO should undertake an evaluation of whether the recommendations of the ad hoc Expert Advisory Panel had been taken into account and, if not, why they had not been. Some Members also noted that the Expert Advisory Panel activity was part of FAO's regular business and stressed that it should be funded by the Regular Programme. It was noted that it was important for States to develop coherent national positions for CITES that supported fisheries conservation goals.

36. Regarding the draft International Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Inland Capture Fisheries, the Committee recommended that FAO undertake further work in relation to the minimum substantive requirements and criteria for inland capture fisheries ecolabels. This work should be combined with similar outstanding work relating to the minimum substantive criteria laid down in the guidelines for marine capture fisheries ecolabels.

37. The Committee noted that an Expert Consultation on Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fish Trade was convened in Washington DC, USA, from 22 to 26 January 2007. The Committee agreed that FAO should convene a technical consultation to consider the Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fish Trade drafted by the Expert Consultation.

38. The Committee endorsed the findings of an FAO report examining the relationship between fish trade and food security and recommended that FAO continue work in this area. Many Members emphasized the need for effective fisheries management to underpin sustainable and responsible trade.

39. Many Members noted the need to harmonize catch documentation, including elements of trade, to strengthen compliance with the conservation and management measures adopted by RFMOs and to suppress trade in IUU-caught product. Many Members expressed the view that FAO should convene an expert consultation to this effect, the timing of which should be synchronized with ongoing work on this topic within RFMOs, in particular work under way in the wake of the Joint Meeting of Tuna Organizations held in Japan in January 2007.

40. The Committee noted the WTO negotiations on fisheries subsidies and recommended that FAO provide technical expertise and cooperation to the ongoing negotiations and be prepared, as necessary, to assist in the implementation of future fisheries subsidies disciplines.

41. The Committee agreed that future agendas for the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade meetings should be forward looking and attempt to identify emerging trade issues.

42. The Committee thanked Germany for offering to host the Eleventh Session of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade in 2008.

#### **DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE THIRD SESSION OF THE COFI SUB-COMMITTEE ON AQUACULTURE**

43. The item was introduced by the Chairperson of the third session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture and the Secretariat and was discussed on the basis of documents COFI/2007/5 and Inf. 4, 7 and 9. The Committee endorsed the report of the Sub-Committee and thanked India for hosting and supporting the Session. The Committee further appreciated the excellent work of the Sub-Committee and the Secretariat.

44. The Committee recognized the ever increasing importance of the aquaculture sector and the need for its sustainable growth in a responsible manner, and reaffirmed its trust in FAO to play a coordinating role in advancing the global aquaculture agenda.

45. The Committee welcomed the recent change in the name of the FAO Fisheries Department to the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department and stressed the importance of an adequate Departmental budget so that more resources could be allocated for aquaculture-related activities. The establishment of a trust fund dedicated to aquaculture should also be explored.

46. The Committee highlighted the importance of addressing socio-economic impacts of aquaculture, improving planning and policy development at national and regional levels, ensuring food safety and human health, and developing best management practices, risk assessment methodologies and guidelines for the better management of aquaculture. The Committee requested FAO to take appropriate action to prioritize and implement the recommendations made by the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture during its third session, recalling in particular the need for technical assistance to Members.

47. The Committee undersecored the need for better information and data on aquaculture in support of the sustainable development of the sector and endorsed the draft Strategy and Outline Plan for Improving Information on Status and Trends of Aquaculture. It also endorsed the concept of establishing a Coordinating Working Party on Aquaculture Statistics and called for speedy implementation of the Strategy.

48. The Committee agreed that high priority should be given to aquaculture development in Africa and a special programme with regular and extra-budgetary funding support should be established with the aim of providing special assistance to African countries to access financial services and markets, to boost investment in aquaculture as well as exchange knowledge and experience, particularly through South-South Cooperation.

49. The need for aquatic production to follow an ecosystem approach to aquaculture according to economically viable, environmentally sustainable and socially acceptable practices was highlighted and the role of certification and better management practices was recognized. The Committee requested FAO to take appropriate action through conducting expert workshops and meetings to develop guidelines on aquaculture certification. Thailand and Brazil confirmed their readiness to host workshops by the end of March 2007 in Bangkok and by July 2007 in Brasilia.

50. The Committee supported strongly the continuing work towards the development of regional aquaculture networks in Africa and the Americas similar to the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific (NACA). Several Members reiterated the need for an aquaculture officer to be placed at the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean.

51. The Committee welcomed the proposed work on genetic resources management in fisheries and aquaculture. Many Members reaffirmed the need for the development of information and certification systems to ensure consumer confidence in aquaculture products, recalling also the concern expressed by several Members of the Sub-Committee on non-governmental certification schemes, which have often resulted in higher costs for producers, without much benefit to them. Some Members requested further work by FAO on issues of low-value trash fish in aquafeeds, ornamental fish and on the impact of climate change in aquaculture.

52. Chile confirmed it would host the Fourth Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture in the second half of 2008. Thailand confirmed its offer to host the Fifth Session in 2010.

## **SOCIAL ISSUES IN SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES**

53. The Secretariat introduced document COFI/2007/6. The Committee commended the Secretariat for highlighting the critical importance of addressing social issues in small-scale fisheries to improve livelihoods, reduce vulnerability and poverty, promote effective and equitable resource governance systems, increase the sector's contribution to local and national development and attaining the millenium development goals (MDGs). Many Members observed that these fisheries were the main contributor to national fish production and to the generation of income and employment in their fisheries sectors. The Committee took note of a joint intervention on behalf of 14 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

stressing that the recognition of the social situation of the fisher peoples from FAO was valuable and welcomed.

54. Whilst recognizing the great diversity in cultural, social, political and economic conditions of fishing practices, the Committee noted that fishers engaged in small-scale fisheries often faced precarious and vulnerable living and working conditions. This is because of insecure rights to land and fishery resources, inadequate or absent health and educational services and social safety nets, and exclusion from wider development processes due to weak organizational structures and representation and participation in decision-making. Some Members noted that women in fisheries could not be treated as a homogenous group in some countries. The Committee also noted the opportunity of small-scale producers, processors and marketers to benefit from globalization including expanding trade in fish and fishery products was often compromised by inadequate access to markets, financial services, know-how and capacity to meet increasingly demanding sanitary and phytosanitary requirements. It was also stressed that sustainable fisheries were a prerequisite for sustainable livelihoods of fishers.

55. The Committee stressed that policies and development programmes needed to be tailored to the specific needs in particular locations, countries and regions and types of small-scale fisheries that could range from occasional subsistence activities to year-round commercial operations targeting fish for export markets. Greater clarity in defining and classifying different categories of small-scale fisheries was suggested by some Members.

56. The Committee noted the positive experiences by several countries in mainstreaming small-scale fisheries into national development policies and the encouraging progress made in introducing co-management and community-based management regimes. The sharing of lessons learned on these experiences was desirable through case studies and South-to-South and fisher-to-fisher exchanges.

57. Many Members from West and Central Africa called for the continuation of the regional Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme (SFLP) that resulted in successful examples of activities carried out in favour of poverty reduction and sustainable management in small-scale fisheries and requested FAO to support this proposal within the framework of a special programme for small-scale fisheries.

58. The Committee recognized that progress in the implementation of international human rights instruments including the conventions on the rights of seafarers and working conditions in fisheries were critical to both small-scale and large-scale fisheries. The Committee stressed that the recognition and adoption of human rights principles can help achieve poverty eradication and facilitate the adoption of responsible fisheries practices.

59. The Committee expressed its support for the strategy of action as noted in paragraph 23 of COFI/2007/6 that brought together responsible fisheries and social development. It stressed the need to adopt a rights-based approach to managing small-scale fisheries that respects the interests of present and future generations and ensures resource sustainability, reduces vulnerability and optimizes the flow of benefits to fishing communities and the wider economy. It addressed broader human rights principles when defining and allocating fishing rights and supported empowerment of fishing communities through social inclusion, gender equality within fishing activities and capacity and capability-building. Several Members cited successful examples of capacity building and empowerment measures including literacy programmes, leadership training, and strengthening of fisher organizations. The continuing

benefits from technological developments were also noted. Some Members expressed concern about the potential of small-scale fisheries to alleviate poverty while other Members reiterated their belief that small-scale fisheries had the potential to reduce poverty and food insecurity.

60. The Committee observed that any specific strategy at local or national level needed to recognize traditional forms of fishing rights and tenure where these exist or existed in the past and be informed by specific objectives and measurable social performance and impact indicators. It considered that it was imperative to protect the poor from adverse impacts of the transition to rights-based fisheries management in relation to access and rights allocation and through the creation of opportunities outside the harvesting sector including aquaculture. It noted cross-sectoral policies were needed that recognized ecosystem considerations, anticipated potential climate change impacts, and were guided by Article 10 of the Code of Conduct on the integration of fisheries into coastal area management. Disaster prevention and mitigation measures and safety-at-sea were highlighted for reducing vulnerability of fishers and coastal communities.

61. The Committee considered different options to give greater prominence to small-scale fisheries in its deliberations and FAO's Programme of Work. The Committee also took note of the strong support by many members to establish a dedicated COFI Sub-Committee and/or a specific programme of work on small-scale fisheries supported by dedicated extra-budgetary funding. Nevertheless, the Committee agreed that the issue of small-scale fisheries was important and FAO should continue to work on this issue. Other Members highlighted the importance of integrating the concerns of small-scale fisheries into all aspects of fisheries discussed at COFI and relevant subsidiary bodies.

62. The Committee welcomed the proposal by Norway that FAO examine the convening of a broad-based international conference focusing specifically on small-scale fisheries of a format similar to the 1999 FishRights and 2006 Sharing the Fish Conferences.

#### **COMBATING ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED (IUU) FISHING THROUGH MONITORING, CONTROL AND SURVEILLANCE, PORT STATES MEASURES AND OTHER MEANS**

63. The Secretariat introduced documents COFI/2007/7 and Inf. 12. In that respect, it informed for the record of this meeting that the certification process of Patagonian toothfish referred to in paragraph 20 of document COFI/2007/7 by the Marine Stewardship Council had been objected to, and rejected by, the Argentine Republic on the basis of the existence of a sovereignty dispute between Argentina and the United Kingdom over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas.

64. The Secretariat also informed for the record of this meeting that the reference made to a report quoted in footnote 11 of Document COFI/2007/7 and footnote 20 of Document COFI/2007/9 Rev.1 did not imply in any way recognition or acceptance by the FAO Secretariat of any assertion or comment contained in that report related to territorial disputes.

65. The Committee commended FAO on the paper and thanked the Organization for providing capacity-building activities to enhance the implementation of the IPOA-IUU and to strengthen MCS as well as technical assistance for the development of NPOAs-IUU and MCS programmes, VMS and port State workshops, and other initiatives. FAO was

encouraged to continue these activities and a number of direct requests for assistance were made.

66. Many Members described their fight against IUU fishing as one of high national priority due to its adverse economic, biological and social consequences. Progress reports were given by a large number of Members on national or regional accomplishments but most admitted that despite these substantial efforts, IUU fishing remained a serious impediment to sustainability.

67. The Committee recognized that all those involved in IUU fishing such as beneficial owners of fishing vessels, as well as of transshipment and support vessels, should be included in the scope of measures to fight against IUU fishing. Moreover, IUU fishing was also an issue of contracting Parties to RFMOs that did not comply with the rules and measures of their organization.

68. Acknowledging the urgent need for a comprehensive suite of port State measures, the Committee took note of the strong support for the Norwegian proposal to develop a new legally binding instrument based on the Model Scheme on Port State Measures to Combat IUU Fishing and the IPOA-IUU. The Committee endorsed the following timetable: an Expert Consultation to be convened during the latter half of 2007 to prepare a draft agreement and a Technical Consultation to finalize the instrument's text during the first half of 2008 and present it to the twenty-eighth COFI Session in 2009. Many Members stressed that the new instrument would represent minimum standards for port States, with flexibility to adopt more stringent measures and some Members also stressed that it should not detract from other previously agreed measures such as the need for capacity reduction. It was noted that Norway advised the Committee that it was prepared to contribute financially to the required process within FAO.

69. Satellite-based vessel monitoring systems (VMS) was cited widely by Members as a cost-effective tool for MCS but one to be used in conjunction with other surveillance and management tools. Referring to the recommendation of the 2006 Expert Consultation on the Use of Monitoring Systems and Satellite Fisheries Monitoring, Control and Surveillance, many Members expressed the view that a new binding instrument was not required. There was support for other activities to be undertaken by FAO including capacity building, further work on data harmonization and formats, updating the technical publication on VMS and drafting model legal provisions.

70. The Committee supported the convening of an Expert Consultation to further develop the concept of a comprehensive global record of fishing vessels as described in FAO's feasibility study, mindful of the need to clarify the project's objectives, sensitivity to costs, confidentiality requirements and the need to link it to other reliable information sources such as national registers and RFMO lists.

71. A number of Members spoke about irresponsible flag States. Many Members suggested the need to develop criteria for assessing the performance of flag States as well as to examine possible actions against vessels flying the flags of States not meeting such criteria. An expert consultation was proposed. Subject to the availability of funds, FAO was requested to further consider this possibility.



72. As a tool to improve enforcement globally, Members were encouraged to join or cooperate with the voluntary International MCS Network, make use of its work and support its enhancement.

### **IMPLEMENTING THE ECOSYSTEM APPROACH TO FISHERIES, INCLUDING DEEP-SEA FISHERIES, MARINE DEBRIS AND LOST AND ABANDONED GEAR**

73. In the discussion after introduction of document COFI/2007/8, there was broad agreement that EAF was the appropriate and necessary framework for fisheries management and many Members reported on the progress that they were making in implementation of EAF. Some members considered that the EAF should be based on existing effective management regime and measures, incrementally incorporating ecosystem consideration as knowledge and capacity grow, without prejudice to the application of the precautionary approach. The efforts by FAO to raise awareness of the need for EAF among Members and RFMs and to facilitate implementation were commended. FAO was urged to complete and distribute the technical guidelines on social, institutional and economic considerations in EAF as quickly as possible. On behalf of the Nordic Council of Ministers, Norway proposed that FAO should cooperate with the Council in planning and implementing a conference about EAF, with an emphasis on socio-economic and institutional conditions and implications.

74. Many developing countries requested greater FAO support for capacity building, through awareness building and direct technical assistance at the national level, drawing attention to the increased institutional capacity required for implementation of EAF. Some Members suggested that FAO should organize regional meetings to allow for exchange of information and expertise. The announcement by Chile that it would implement a post-graduate programme on the social and economic aspects of EAF was welcomed by many delegations from the Latin American region. Chile with the support of several Members requested technical support from FAO in developing the programme.

75. Some Members urged FAO to give attention to the implementation of EAF in coral reef ecosystems as a priority area. Concern was expressed by some Members that FAO was neglecting the potential importance of predator-prey relationships in an ecosystem approach. The Secretariat confirmed that food web interactions were a consideration in EAF, as indicated in paragraph 46 of COFI/2007/8 and demonstrated in the field projects, and that the relative priority of the different issues needed to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

76. The need to address threats posed by climate change were raised by several Members. There was support for a proposal that FAO should undertake a scoping study to identify the key issues on climate change and fisheries, initiate a discussion on how the fishing industry can adapt to climate change, and for FAO to take a lead in informing fishers and policy makers about the likely consequences of climate change for fisheries.

77. Many Members referred to UNGA Resolution A/RES/61/105, especially paragraphs 80 to 91, and to the need that FAO act on the requests in the Resolution. COFI agreed that FAO should convene an expert consultation, no later than August 2007, to prepare draft technical guidelines including standards for the management of deep-sea fisheries in the high seas, to be finalized at a technical consultation in January or February 2008. This timing was to allow regional fisheries management organizations or arrangements (RFMO/As) and flag States to develop measures by the deadline of 31 December 2008, as required by A/RES/61/105. Some Members noted that the UNGA timeframe for RFMOs under

development was 31 December 2007 and that the interim measures to be developed could be informed by the expert consultation. It was agreed that the technical guidelines should include standards and criteria for identifying vulnerable marine ecosystems beyond areas under national jurisdiction and the impacts of fishing activities on such ecosystems, in order to facilitate the adoption and the implementation of conservation and management measures by RFMO/As and flag States (pursuant to paragraphs 83 and 86 of the Resolution). It was also noted that a meeting of States engaged in high sea deep-seas fisheries was referred to in paragraph 89 of the UNGA Resolution. Japan informed the meeting that it would make available the funds for these activities. Iceland informed the members that it was willing to contribute up to US\$100 000. Some Members called for a moratorium on high seas deep-sea fisheries until the impacts of fishing activities on these ecosystems could be assessed.

78. Many Members referred to the linked problems of marine debris and lost or abandoned fishing gear. It was agreed that the issue of derelict fishing gear is particularly relevant to FAO. There was widespread support for the proposal that FAO should convene an expert consultation on the marking of fishing gear although some Members stated that it had not yet been fully discussed by COFI and suggested that the topic should be a full agenda item at the next COFI Session. FAO was requested to consult with IMO in its efforts to assess current international instruments or measures related to marine debris.

79. The important role of marine protected areas (MPAs) in biodiversity conservation and fisheries management was reaffirmed by COFI. Many Members expressed the view that the establishment of MPAs must be based on the best available scientific and other information and be well designed and properly implemented with full participation by all stakeholders. It was noted that MPAs were one tool and should be used in combination with other appropriate management tools. FAO was encouraged to complete its technical guidelines on the design, implementation and testing of MPAs in relation to fishing at the earliest opportunity.

80. Bycatch was recognized by COFI as being a serious concern in many fisheries. It was agreed that FAO should, in cooperation with relevant bodies, develop best practice guidelines to assist countries and RFMOs in implementation of the IPOA-Seabirds and that the best practice guidelines should be extended to other relevant fishing gears. Many Members expressed the view that the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) and BirdLife International were the most relevant bodies in that context.

81. COFI agreed that FAO should continue its work on biodiversity mapping as an important contribution to implementation of EAF in collaboration with Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). It was also agreed that FAO should follow the request in: (i) paragraph 90 of the UNGA Resolution to create a global database on vulnerable marine ecosystems in areas beyond national jurisdiction, in cooperation with other relevant organizations such as The World Conservation Union (IUCN), and (ii) paragraph 87 of the Resolution to create a list of authorized vessels engaged in high seas deep-sea fisheries.

82. A large number of Members expressed concern about the safety at sea for fishing vessels, especially small-scale fishing vessels. FAO was urged to continue collaboration with IMO and it was suggested that FAO should develop guidelines on best practices for safety at sea and that COFI should consider developing an IPOA on the subject.

## **STRENGTHENING REGIONAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS (RFMOs) AND THEIR PERFORMANCES INCLUDING THE OUTCOME OF THE 2007 TUNA RFMOs MEETING**

83. The Secretariat introduced document COFI/2007/9 Rev.1. In its introduction, the Secretariat also recalled the observations that it had already made in relation to footnote 20 of this document. The Secretariat highlighted the management role of RFMOs and the advisory role of RFBs. The awareness of the need to strengthen and increase the efficacy of these organizations was noted and it was recalled that the twenty-sixth session of COFI called for the performance of RFMOs to be evaluated.

84. The Committee was informed by Japan about the joint meeting of five RFMOs with a mandate for the management of tuna stocks that was held in Kobe, Japan, in January 2007. The meeting was held in order to consider ways to promote cooperation among these five tuna RFMOs beyond their individual frameworks. A Course of Actions describing key areas and challenges as well as follow-up actions by the five tuna RFMOs and their members, was adopted. Although it is not binding, many Members expressed strong support for it.

85. Many Members supported the idea of additional joint meetings of non-tuna RFMOs with similar mandates and objectives, including those responsible for small-scale fisheries. FAO was asked to play a role in providing assistance, participation and advice for this process.

86. Members emphasized the importance of conducting performance reviews of RFMOs and RFBs. Several Members stressed the need to develop common criteria for the evaluation of core functions and obligations, while recognizing that flexibility was needed for each RFMO or RFB to decide independently upon the methodology, criteria and frequency of reviews. The Committee also noted that review processes should be transparent with some Members recommending a mixed panel of experts consisting of both external and internal participants.

87. Some Members noted the work of the "Independent High Level Panel to Develop a Model for Improved Governance by RFMOs", hosted by Chatham House, which could assist the review processes of RFMOs and RFBs.

88. Several Members emphasized that due attention must be paid to the rights and needs of developing countries, including small island developing States (SIDS), in particular to facilitate their full participation in the work of RFMOs and RFBs.

89. Many Members requested that FAO continue supporting RFMOs and RFBs and continue its work on issues of concern to them such as overcapacity, improvement of fleet statistics and the issues of countries that undermine the effectiveness of RFMOs and vessels under "flags of non compliance". Several Members requested that FAO should cooperate with IOTC members to develop a solution ensuring the efficiency and continuity of the activities of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC).

## **FAO'S PROGRAMME OF WORK IN FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE**

90. The Secretariat introduced Agenda Item 12 based on document COFI 2007/10 and Inf. 6 and highlighted the salient changes in both programme and structure. In this respect, it

highlighted that the reduction in the number of programme entities did not reflect a reduction in the amount of work but rather a consolidation and harmonization of these programme entities.

91. The Committee expressed dissatisfaction with the level of the budget assigned to the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, which is not commensurate with the importance of its work and the expectations of the international community. The Committee requested strongly that the relevant FAO Governing Bodies allocate more resources to the Department. Some Members emphasized the importance that national representatives to the upcoming meetings of these bodies be properly informed about the situation. In this connection, the Committee looks forward to the findings and recommendations of the on-going independent external evaluation (IEE).

92. The Committee indicated that it would like to receive, as a matter of course, ex-post and any other analysis of how the total fisheries budget had been spent in the preceeding biennium. The Committee needed this information to better understand the trends in its planning context and to be able to pose questions that would be helpful in understanding risks to the programme. This included both field work and policy work.

93. Many Members stressed the importance for the major activities of the Department to be funded by the regular programme. In this connection, they expressed concern for the increasing proportion of extra-budgetary funding for supporting these activities. Several Members noted the need, for the sake of more transparency and accountability, to be provided with a more detailed report on such funding.

94. Whilst reiterating that all activities of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department were important, the Committee emphasized that the work programme of the Department should take due consideration of the priorities highlighted by COFI in the previous paragraphs.

#### **ANY OTHER MATTERS**

95. The Committee was informed by the Kingdom of Denmark that the Faroe Islands had decided to seek associated membership of the FAO, and that the Permanent Representation of Denmark to FAO had taken up contact with the FAO Secretariat with a view to preparing a formal application to be lodged on behalf of the Faroe Islands by the Government of Denmark.

96. Some members noted the active role of NGOs to further promote responsible and sustainable fisheries and aquaculture around the world. They stressed the need to develop, within the framework of COFI, a fair and equitable process to promote dialogue between Members and NGOs.

97. The Committee noted with regret that its twenty-seventh session was the last one in which Mr Serge Garcia, Director of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Management Division, was participating before his retirement. It paid him a special tribute and expressed its sincere gratitude and thanks for his outstanding contribution and excellence of his work.

98. The Committee was informed of the retirement of Mr Glenn Hurry (Australia) and Mr Serge Beslier (European Community) in the near future and expressed its gratitude for their outstanding contribution to its work.

#### **DATE AND PLACE OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION**

99. It was agreed that the Committee should meet in Rome in the first quarter of 2009. The exact date would be determined by the Director-General in consultation with the Chairperson.

#### **ADOPTION OF THE REPORT**

100. The report was adopted on 9 March 2007.

**Agenda**

1. Opening of the Session
2. Adoption of the Agenda and arrangements for the Session
3. Election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons and designation of Drafting Committee
4. Progress Report on the Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and Related International Plans of Action
5. Rehabilitation and reconstruction of livelihoods in the fisheries and aquaculture sector in countries affected by the Tsunami in 2004
6. Decisions and recommendations of the tenth session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, Santiago de Compostela, Spain, 30 May–2 June 2006
7. Decisions and recommendations of the third session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, New Delhi, India, 4–8 September 2006
8. Social issues in small-scale fisheries
9. Combating IUU fishing through monitoring, control and surveillance, port States measures and other means
10. Implementing the ecosystem approach to fisheries, including deep-sea fisheries, marine debris and lost and abandoned gear
11. Strengthening RFMOs and their performances including the outcome of the 2007 Tuna RFMOs Meeting
12. FAO's Programme of Work in Fisheries and Aquaculture
13. Any other matters
14. Date and place of the next session
15. Adoption of the report

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First Vice-Chairperson:	Mr Z.S. Karnicki (Poland)
Vice-Chairpersons:	El Salvador, Iceland, Iran (Islamic Republic of), New Zealand and United Republic of Tanzania

## DRAFTING COMMITTEE

The Committee elected Mr Julien Turenne (France) as Chairperson of the Drafting Committee, with the following membership: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Japan, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Thailand, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America.

## FAO FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE DEPARTMENT

Assistant Director-General:	Ichiro Nomura
Director, Fishery and Aquaculture Management Division:	Serge Garcia
Director, Fishery Products and Industry Division:	Grimur Valdimarsson
Director, Fishery and Aquaculture Economics and Policy Division:	Jean-François Pulvenis de Séligny

## SECRETARIAT

Secretary:	N. Gucyc
Secretary, Drafting Committee:	D.J. Doulman
Meetings Officer:	R. Al-Khafaji

## List of documents

COFI/2007/1	Agenda and Timetable
COFI/2007/2	Progress in the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, related International Plans of Action and Strategy
COFI/2007/3	Rehabilitation and reconstruction of livelihoods in the fisheries and aquaculture sector in countries affected by the Tsunami in 2004
COFI/2007/4	Decisions and recommendations of the tenth session of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade
COFI/2007/5	Decisions and recommendations of the third session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture
COFI/2007/6	Social issues in small-scale fisheries
COFI/2007/7	Combating IUU fishing through monitoring, control and surveillance, port States measures and other means
COFI/2007/8	Implementing the Ecosystem approach to fisheries, including deep-sea fisheries, biodiversity conservation, marine debris and lost and abandoned gear
COFI/2007/9	Strengthening RFMOs and their performances including the outcome of the 2007 Tuna RFMOs Meeting
COFI/2007/10	FAO's Programme of Work in Fisheries and Aquaculture
COFI/2007/Inf.1	List of documents
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COFI/2007/Inf.4	Annotations/Guide notes on agenda items
COFI/2007/Inf.5	Report of the twenty-sixth session of the Committee on Fisheries, Rome, Italy, 7-11 March 2005
COFI/2007/Inf.6	Achievements of Major Programme 2.3 Fisheries 2004-2005
COFI/2007/Inf.7	Follow-up to the Recommendations of the twenty-sixth session of the Committee on Fisheries, Rome, Italy, 7-11 March 2005
COFI/2007/Inf.8	Report of the tenth session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, Santiago de Compostela, Spain, 30 May-2 June 2006
COFI/2007/Inf.9 Rev.1	Report of the third session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, New Delhi, India, 4-8 September 2006
COFI/2007/Inf.10	Synthesis of the report of the sixth session of the Advisory Committee on Fisheries Research, Rome, 16-20 October 2006
COFI/2007/Inf.11	Report on follow-up on actions on sea-turtles
COFI/2007/Inf.12	Report on the development of a comprehensive record of fishing vessels
COFI/2007/Inf.13	Report of the Expert Consultation on the Development of International Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Inland Capture Fisheries, Rome, Italy, 23-26 May 2006
COFI/2007/Inf.14	Statement of Competence and Voting Rights submitted by the European Community and its Member States



## APPENDIX D

**Opening statement by Mr David A. Harcharik  
Deputy Director-General**

Mr Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning, and welcome to this twenty-seventh Session of the Committee on Fisheries. I am pleased to see that we have very good attendance here today. This clearly reflects the importance you all attach to COFI and to FAO's work in fisheries. Thank you.

We are honoured to have with us today the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization, Mr Efthimios Mitropoulos.

As you know, FAO collaborates closely with the IMO, and Mr Mitropoulos's presence here today is proof of the excellent relations that are maintained between our two Organizations. Welcome, Secretary-General, to FAO and to this session of COFI, and thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to join us.

Mr Chairman, distinguished Delegates,

At the outset, I think I should inform you that our Fisheries Department has a new name. At the beginning of this year the department was renamed the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department. It was felt that this new name better reflected our new challenges and the broader framework of the FAO reform, especially the growing importance of aquaculture.

Now, without taking too much of your time, I would like to touch briefly on some of the issues you will be discussing this week.

First, *implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries* remains a major topic. We will share with you information on FAO's activities in support of collective and individual efforts to implement the Code at the global, regional and national levels. For many countries, implementation is a difficult and slow process. This is due to a variety of constraints that, in many instances, cannot be addressed satisfactorily by the countries alone. Cooperation and assistance are required in addition to more resolute commitments by countries themselves.

This agenda item on the Code of Conduct is a key one. I hope that your deliberations will lead to the identification of mechanisms and strategies that facilitate and enhance implementation of the Code, bearing in mind that it is a comprehensive instrument directed at all those involved in fisheries, and that it applies to all types of fisheries and aquaculture, in all areas, marine and inland, within national jurisdiction and on the high seas.

*Emergencies and natural disasters* is another key agenda item. The difficulties and obstacles that hamper the implementation of the Code may be greatly compounded by emergencies and natural disasters. In this respect, we cannot and must not forget the tragic tsunami that affected countries in the Indian Ocean, and in particular their fishing communities. The Ministerial Meeting held immediately after the last session of your Committee highlighted the need for FAO to play a key role in helping the governments of affected countries to rebuild fisheries and aquaculture in a responsible and people-centred manner.

In its response, FAO has focused its action both on emergency relief and on longer term development work. Based on our response to the tsunami, your Committee may wish to offer guidance on the future work of FAO in responding to emergencies and natural disasters.

Third, there is *growing awareness and recognition* that, in terms of fish supply, no major increases can be expected from capture fisheries, even with improved management practices. Production has indeed stagnated over the last decade. As the fastest growing animal-food producing sector, *aquaculture* should play a crucial role in filling the expected gap in fish supply.

However, this growth of the aquaculture sector may also bring with it a number of important risks, such as increased environmental degradation and marginalization of stakeholders. The responsible and successful development of aquaculture will need to anticipate and prevent the negative environmental effects, while also addressing the needs of the poor.

The Third Session of the COFI Sub-Committee on Aquaculture underscored the importance of identifying and quantifying the socio-economic impacts of aquaculture. It stressed the need for the sector to become a mature and sustainable contributor to local and national economies and to the wellbeing of society. Your guidance is needed on a number of recommendations that were made by the last session of the Sub-Committee.

In the search for greater food production and socio-economic development, the importance of the role of *small-scale and artisanal fisheries* must be recognized. Social development issues are for sure addressed through various sectoral policies relating to education, health, social insurance and others, but this should be done without forgetting that fishing communities constitute an integral part of society. The holistic approach must not be ignored. Your Committee is invited to provide guidance on the kind of policies and measures that should be adopted in support of the social development of small-scale fisheries.

Whatever be the nature, scale or geographic location of fishing activities, *illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU)* fishing continues to be a major impediment to achieving long-term sustainable fisheries. It affects all capture fisheries to a greater or lesser extent. The challenges that face the international community, its members and all stakeholders in relation to the fight against IUU fishing are still huge. Thus, even though you have discussed it before, this issue remains on your agenda. Your discussions are expected to stimulate and steer action on the next steps forward in areas such as, for example, Port State measures, or monitoring, control and surveillance, particularly through the efficient use of vessel monitoring systems (VMS).

Mr Chairman,

Although in the interest of time, I will not elaborate on them, I will flag some of the other important matters that await your attention. For example:

- International trade of fish and fishery products;
- The implementation of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries, including deep-sea fisheries, biodiversity conservation, marine debris and lost and abandoned gear; and
- The need to strengthen the Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs).

And, of course, we will be seeking your input to the formulation of the programme of work of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department for 2008-2009.

Mr Chairman, distinguished delegates,

Before closing, I have to inform you, with much regret, that this is the last session of COFI in which Mr Serge Garcia, Director of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Management Division, will be participating before his retirement. Mr Garcia is very well known to you, and his commitment to this Committee, and to FAO and its members, has always been of the highest order, and is highly appreciated. I am sure you will all join me in paying him special tribute and expressing our sincere gratitude and thanks for his outstanding contribution and excellence of his work.

Fortunately, we have a highly qualified individual ready to immediately replace Serge. He has served FAO for some 26 years, so many of you will already know Mr Jorge Csirke-Barcelli. We are sure that Jorge's extensive experience in fisheries resources and his knowledge of the major global issues in the fisheries sector will stand him in excellent stead to lead the Fisheries and Aquaculture Management Division, and to make a valuable contribution to the work of the Committee on Fisheries.

Thank you.

**Statement by Mr Efthimios Mitropoulos  
Secretary-General  
International Maritime Organization**

Mr Chairman, Deputy Director-General, Honourable Ministers, distinguished delegates,

It gives me great pleasure to have the opportunity to address you today and I thank Director-General Diouf for his invitation to me to do so and, indeed, all of you for sparing the time for me in your agenda in what I know is something of a departure from your usual protocol. And thank you, Mr Harcharik, for your kind words of introduction.

I speak to you, in this Eternal City today, in the spirit of the long standing co-operation between IMO, FAO and, indeed, ILO in our work related to fishing. There is a natural overlap here between all three agencies: IMO, with its general mandate for safety at sea and protection of the marine environment; ILO, in its work on labour standards and working conditions in the fishing industry; and FAO, with its mandate for fisheries in general. Later on, I will refer again to our beneficial co-operation on several important technical issues, but I would not wish to miss this opportunity to acknowledge, with thanks, the contribution of your Organization, ILO and other United Nations agencies and organizations, in responding promptly and successfully to the UN General Assembly's invitation to us to examine and clarify the role of the "genuine link" in relation to the duty of flag States to exercise effective control over ships flying their flag, including fishing vessels – a task, which was assigned to an Ad Hoc Consultative Meeting held at IMO Headquarters in July 2005.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We all know that, since the creation of the universe, the oceans have provided, further to many other goods benefitting our planet and mankind, a rich source of food and, as a result, fishing has long been a major source of employment and economic benefit for those engaged in it and in all its ancillary activities. In recent years, fisheries have become a dynamically developing sector of the food industry worldwide. Often, in response to growing national and international demand for fish and fishery products, many States have, within their individual capabilities and constraints, employed various means to harness these rich natural resources within and outside their own coastal waters and exclusive economic zones, ranging from large modern fishing fleets to artisanal or small-scale fishing.

Commercial fishing has long been acknowledged to be a dangerous field of employment. All its activities – during transit, when fishing, processing and storing or discharging catch – expose fishers to danger during the entire time they are at work on their vessels. And the hard fact that accidents, casualties, injury and loss of life in the industry are generally accepted to be much higher than in the maritime sector as a whole provides a convincing answer, I believe, to my presence here today.

The safety of fishing vessels has been a matter of genuine concern to IMO since the Organization's inception, but the differences in the design, construction and, above all, the operation between fishing vessels and other types of ship have proved to be an obstacle to their inclusion in the near-universally accepted international maritime safety instruments adopted by IMO, more particularly, the Safety of Life at Sea and Load Lines Conventions. If nothing else, the vast majority of fishing vessels leave and return to the same port and, therefore, do not take part in "international voyages", even though they might have fished on the high seas. And as to the unique nature of their operation, I wonder in which other maritime operation do we observe ships loading and stowing their cargo not in safe ports and calm waters but in the middle of the sea, so often in unfavourable weather conditions?

The nature of the fishing industry renders it extremely difficult to develop regulations for other sections of the shipping industry which can also be applied without modification to fishing vessels. However, notwithstanding such difficulties, IMO has addressed the issue and its efforts, over many years, have culminated in the adoption of two instruments that would, were they in force, provide an appropriate mandatory international safety regime for fishing. These are the **1993 Torremolinos Protocol for the Safety of Fishing Vessels** and the **1995 International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel** (otherwise known as the STCW-F Convention).

Let me say a few words, by way of explanation, about each of these. The **1993 Torremolinos Protocol** updated, amended and absorbed a previous Convention on fishing vessel safety, which had been adopted also in Torremolinos in 1977 without ever coming into force. The 1993 Protocol aimed at taking into account technological evolution in the intervening years and the need to approach the issue in a pragmatic manner to encourage ratification. In particular, it took into account the trend to exploit deep water fishing grounds on a large scale and to conduct fishing operations in distant waters, thus resulting in the building of a new generation of more sophisticated fishing vessels.

It applies principally to new fishing vessels of 24 metres in length and over and includes essential safety requirements for, among other things, construction and equipment, stability, watertight integrity, machinery and electrical installations, fire protection, protection of the crew, life-saving appliances, emergency procedures, musters and drills, and shipborne radio and navigational equipment.

For its part, the **1995 STCW-F Convention** addresses the human element in the fishing industry by developing globally acceptable standards for training and demonstration of competence for fishing vessel personnel. It is relatively short – just 15 articles and an annex containing technical regulations – yet it is the first international instrument that introduces standards of competence and proficiency for all fishing vessel personnel in their respective tasks. It requires basic safety training for all such personnel and sets standards for skippers and deck officers and for engineers on various sizes of fishing vessels. I cannot tell you here how many times, at meetings of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) of the United Nations, your Director General has made the wise statement “Give a man a fish and he will feed his family once – teach him how to fish and he will be able to feed his family forever”. Our STCW-F does not teach fishermen how to fish – what it does is to tell them how to do their job **safely**.

However, as I have stressed on numerous occasions in the past, the real value of international instruments (such as the Torremolinos Protocol and the STCW-F Convention) lies not so much in their technical provisions but in the manner in which they are implemented. And it remains a matter of genuine concern – for all of us, I am sure – that, as yet, neither of the Torremolinos Protocol nor the STCW-F Convention has received sufficient ratifications to enter into force. As a result, this vital yet inherently dangerous industry, which reportedly suffers around 24,000 human losses annually, is still lacking the international mandatory safety regime which could, and would, be provided by the two instruments.

The Torremolinos Protocol, adopted 14 years ago, requires acceptance by 15 States with an aggregate fleet of at least 14000 vessels of 24 metres in length and over; currently, it has 13 Contracting States with an aggregate fleet of just over 3000 such vessels. This failure to reach the relevant criteria so concerned the IMO Council that, less than two years ago, it requested a specific study to be carried out to identify what the Organization should do to facilitate the Protocol's entry into force. The result was that, unless States with large fishing vessels under their flag ratify it, the Protocol does not stand good chances to come into force in the foreseeable future.

Similarly, the STCW-F Convention requires acceptance by 15 States for it to enter into force and thus give international effect to its provisions. Regrettably, however, although it was adopted nearly 12 years ago, there are currently only eight Contracting States.

Let me, therefore, take this opportunity to urge, once again, all those countries that have not ratified the two instruments to do so with all speed and thereby hasten their entry into force, which is long overdue. I make this plea – through you, distinguished delegates – to your Governments, not only as Secretary-General of the United Nations agency that regulates the safety of merchant shipping but, perhaps equally importantly, as an ex-scaffarer who has witnessed personally the benefits that such regulations bring, daily, to a working life at sea, and who would wish to see them extended rapidly to my fellow brethren, the fishers.

At IMO, an argument usually made by our delegates at meetings dealing with fishing vessel safety and personnel, in their majority, is that they usually represent Governmental departments (Ministries of Transport or Mercantile Marine, for example) other than the one that is directly responsible for regulating and overseeing the fishing industry (this, in many countries, being the Ministry of Agriculture), over which they have little influence. Be that as it may, I strongly believe that the safety of human life is of such paramount importance that all bureaucratic impediments should be brushed aside to ensure its integrity. I am here today to do just that: to share my concerns with you by means of a direct communication with you.

That having been said, IMO has not stood idle while waiting for the aforementioned treaties to gain the requisite international acceptance. On the contrary, we have developed, in collaboration with your own Organization and with ILO, a number of non-mandatory instruments, including the **FAO/ILO/IMO Document for Guidance on Fishermen's Training and Certification**; the revised **Code of Safety for Fishermen and Fishing Vessels, 2005**, and the **Voluntary Guidelines for the Design, Construction and Equipment of Small Fishing Vessels, 2005**.

The revised **Code and Voluntary Guidelines** – originally developed and approved in the 1970s – have been prepared for use primarily by competent authorities, training institutions, fishing vessel owners, fishers' representative organizations and non-governmental organizations having a recognized role in fishers' safety, health and training. The Code provides guidance on the development of national codes and fishers' education and training manuals, and on their safety and health. Competent authorities are encouraged to make use of the contents of the Code and the Voluntary Guidelines in the production of safety, health and training materials in an appropriate format to suit the particular needs of the fisheries of the particular country or region.

Additionally, several IMO resolutions and circulars addressing various aspects of fishing vessel safety have been developed over the years, while the preparation of safety standards for small fishing vessels, below 12m in length, and undecked fishing vessels of any size, is now underway at IMO – in co-operation with FAO and ILO – with a target completion date of 2009.

Moreover, to raise awareness of the importance, to safety, of the Torremolinos Protocol and the STCW-F Convention, IMO has reached out directly to Member Governments, the industry, the fishers themselves, and entire fishing communities, through a series of regional seminars and workshops, which have helped us to obtain grassroots perspectives on problems and their causes. Recommendations made at these regional events led the IMO Secretariat to develop model courses on the safety of fishing operations, which now form part of the training material for the regional seminars and workshops. Overall, the principal focus has been to move away from the nonchalant acceptance that 'accidents just happen' and foster an understanding that 'accidents do not have to happen and can be prevented'.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The lack of internationally enforced standards of education, training, minimum competency and minimum vessel safety has, and will continue to, cost fishers their lives, their property and their livelihoods; it will continue to cost their families the loss of their loved ones on whom they depend, in many cases, for survival. This state of affairs cannot go on. It is high time that a broad culture of

safety at sea was developed and instilled throughout the fishing sector, to improve the record of the industry as a whole and save the lives of fishing vessel personnel, in particular.

Valuable though they are, the voluntary measures adopted by IMO are no substitute for national laws and regulations, nor, indeed, for the provisions of international instruments in relation to the safety of fishing vessels and their crews. In this context, I should like to draw your attention to the second meeting of the joint IMO/FAO working group on IUU fishing and related matters, to be held here in Rome later this year. I am confident that this will provide an excellent opportunity to further promote – and hopefully, achieve – the entry into force of the IMO instruments to which I have referred.

Although it is not possible to eliminate all of the hazards of nature, it is possible, with the appropriate commitment from those of you responsible for regulating the fishing industry, to make it safer. The means to do so are there at our disposal, and I urge all parties concerned to make good use of them.

In conclusion, may I thank you, once again, for affording me the opportunity to address you. I have no doubt that my words will not fall on deaf ears and that, working together, we can make a difference – and I wish you every success with your deliberations this week.

Thank you.

The twenty-seventh session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) was held in Rome, Italy, from 5 to 9 March 2007. The Committee reviewed the issues of an international character and the programme of work of FAO/IFI in fisheries and aquaculture. In addition to the further work to facilitate and ensure the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and its International Plans of Action (IPOAs) (on capacity; illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing; sharks; and seabirds), COFI welcomed the pending submission of a general multi-year programme of work on genetic resource management in fisheries and aquaculture. The Committee expressed concern about the level of fishing capacity which was higher than prior to the 2004 tsunami in some of the areas affected by the disaster and recognized that it called for (with FAO assistance as required) the design and implementation of sustainable and effective fisheries management arrangements that included a gradually phasing out fishing overcapacity, monitoring, access and livelihood considerations. COFI also referred to the issue of safety-at-sea in relation to the use of sub-standard vessels. The Committee recognized the importance of traceability for fish trade and welcomed the Memorandum of Understanding between FAO and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The Committee reaffirmed its trust in FAO to play a coordinating role in advancing the global aquaculture agenda and highlighted the importance of addressing socio-economic impacts of aquaculture and other issues, such as improving planning and policy development at national and regional levels. The Committee agreed to give greater attention to small-scale fisheries and welcomed the convening of a broad-based international conference focusing specifically on small-scale fisheries. The Committee encouraged Members to join or cooperate with the voluntary International Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) Network and to develop a new legally binding instrument based on the Model Scheme on Port State Measures to Combat IUU Fishing and the IPOA-IUU. The Committee identified several areas for further work on issues related to the ecosystem approach to fisheries. The Committee found the level of the budget assigned to the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department unsatisfactory and not commensurate with the importance of its work and the expectations of the international community, and made a strong request that the relevant FAO Governing Bodies allocate more resources to the Department.

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